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Gender Discrimination

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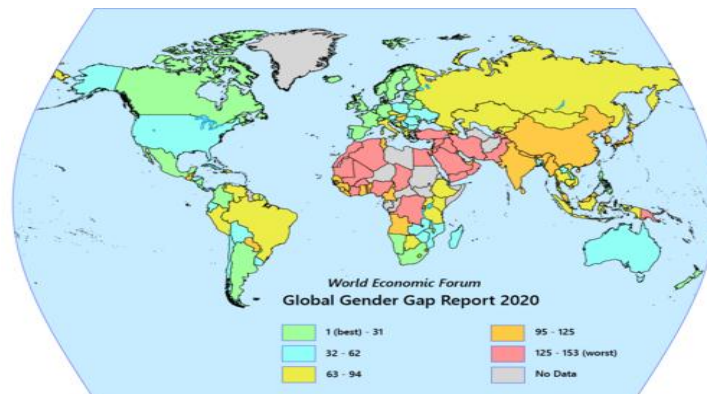
ABSTRACT

Discrimination based on gender (or sex) is a common civil rights violation that takes many forms, including sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and unequal pay for women who do the same jobs as men. Unfortunately, most U.S. women are all too familiar with all of these inequalities. This section offers in-depth information on unlawful gender and sex discrimination in a number of settings -- including employment and education -- and provides links to key federal laws and U.S. Supreme Court decisions related to gender and sex discrimination. Gender discrimination laws also protect the rights of transgender individuals. Girls and women suffer most of the negative impact of rigid gender norms and roles, they are more likely to experience restrictions of their freedom and mobility, they experience epidemic levels of violence and harassment across the globe and have fewer opportunities to choose how to live their lives. But boys and men suffer too. Ideas about what it means to be a man force boys and men to behave in very limited ways which can harm them. Negative masculinities encouraged in boys serve to perpetuate the cycle of discrimination and inequality. Denying people the freedom to choose their path in life because of their gender prevents them from fulfilling their full potential. There is lots we can do to help build a more gender-equal world.

KEYWORDS: gender, inequality, work, discrimination, freedom, employment, education, unequal pay.

Introduction

Gender discrimination describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male or female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities. [1,2]



The following is a list of discriminatory acts you may come across among your peers, at home, at school or in the workplace.



➤ Sexual harassment, catcalling

Harassment and catcalling on the street are prime examples of how women's right to walk freely around their environment is restricted. The normalisation of harassment and inaction of bystanders and authorities perpetuate this form of discrimination and limit women's freedom.

➤ Gender stereotypes at school and work

Stereotypes are how societies expect people to act based on their gender. For example, girls should stay at home and help with housework and childcare, should dress modestly and not stay out late at night. People are often judged by how well they adhere to the gender stereotypes.

These stereotypes can often bleed out into school and work, where girls are less likely to be encouraged into science and technology subjects or leadership roles, due to the perceived 'male nature' of these pursuits. Likewise, seemingly positive stereotypes and gender roles such as men being the 'provider' or 'protector' of the family, put an unnecessary burden on men and boys that could more positively be shared in an equal partnership.

These attitudes limit girls' power by rendering them less able to help contribute to making the world around them a better place.[3,4]

➤ Objectification and poor representation

Objectification is when a person is treated as a commodity or an object without regard to their personality or dignity. It commonly happens in the media where women are photoshopped and airbrushed leading to much more emphasis and value being put on their external appearance above other capacities. This affects girls' body image, their self-esteem and ultimately the value they put on themselves.

However, girls are also often represented poorly in entertainment and the media in ways that reinforce damaging gender stereotypes and traditional roles. Objectification must be called out and girls must be encouraged to tell their own stories – ones that reflect their power, potential and diversity. [5,6]



1. Speak out about your own experiences

It's important, if you feel comfortable, to call out your own experiences of discrimination. This could be highlighting sexist remarks made by your friends or peers or reporting harassment on public transport.

It's important to note that there are dangers associated with calling others out on their behaviour. People may not like to have their viewpoints challenged; they may react in a negative or aggressive way, so if your instincts tell you that a situation is too risky, your own safety is the priority.

Often the best course of action when discrimination is experienced is to alert an authority figure – a member of staff on public transport, or where relevant your teacher or your boss. The more they are made aware these issues are happening, the more they'll be encouraged to step in and be part of the solution. [7,8]

2. Call out discrimination in the media and advertising

Write to advertisers, marketers and media outlets if you come across stories that portray women and girls in a reductive or unfair way.

- Are there gender stereotypes in your textbooks at school?
- Does an advert in your city objectify women?
- Does a film you've watched have fewer speaking roles for women?

Find out who is responsible and write to them to let them know your thoughts.

Also vote with your feet. Don't support entertainment that is disrespectful to girls and women and doesn't represent their true power, potential, talent and diversity.

THE 6 ACTION COALITIONS of the Equality Generation Forum



Gender-based violence



Economic justice and rights



Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights



Feminist action for climate justice



Technology and innovation for Gender Equality



Feminist movements and leadership

3. Support other campaigners

A great way to make a big effect in the pursuit of gender equality is to join with others. Seek out local campaign groups. Join or set up school or university societies for gender equality and female leadership. There is strength in numbers, more voices tackling a particular issue means they are more likely to be heard.

Helping to raise the profile of campaigns by other marginalised groups is a vital part of ending discrimination. For example, girls from a minority or indigenous community may experience racism as well as sexism, and members of the LGBTIQ+ community may also be experiencing homophobia. Be their allies and lend your voice to their causes. [9,10]

4. It's OK to not challenge discrimination every time you see it

As mentioned above, sometimes calling out discrimination can carry risks. It's not your job alone to fix the world. We are all part of the same movement.

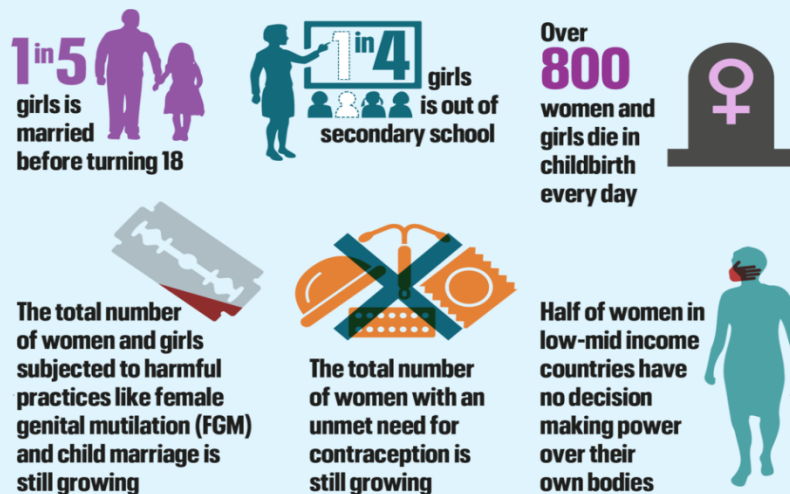
Just changing how we relate with others, and demanding that others do the same, will not end gender inequality. Lasting change will only happen if the institutions that affect our lives also change. Don't feel defeated by these big obstacles – each small achievement is an extra step towards our shared goal.

Caring for ourselves means we can continue to advocate for gender equality so always make sure you are maintaining your own wellbeing.[11]

Discussion

Every girl and boy deserves an equal chance to survive and thrive. As the leading expert on childhood, Save the Children has been championing equal rights for every child for over 100 years – in fact, we invented the concept. Today, we are the leading champion for the human rights of the world's 2.2 billion girls and boys.

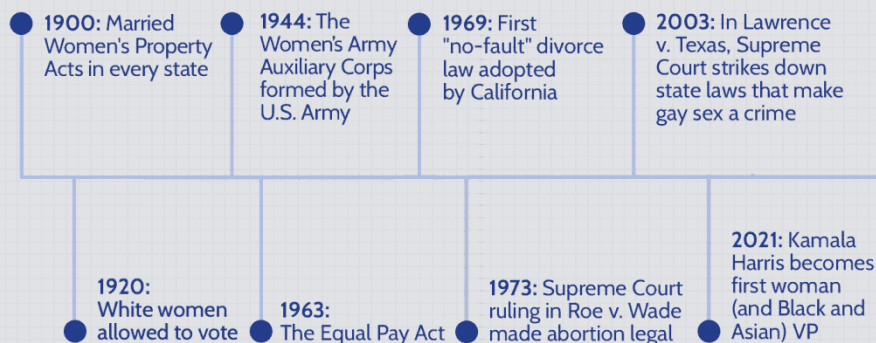
GENDER INEQUALITY - THE FACTS



Yet, gender discrimination, starting in childhood, continues to rob children of their childhoods and limit their chances – disproportionately affecting the world's girls. A girl is far more likely to be denied her rights, kept from school, forced to marry and subjected to violence – her voice undervalued, if it's heard at all. This assault on childhood also deprives nations of the energy and talent they need to progress.

At the current rate of change, it will take over 200 years to achieve gender equality, and that's just in the U.S. This is unacceptable. Together, we can create a more equal world, right from the start.[12]

Notable Milestones in Gender Equality



Gender discrimination is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty. This includes international laws providing for equal gender rights between men and women, as well as those specifically dedicated to the realization of women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women – considered the international bill of rights for women.

Federal, state and local laws protect individuals from gender discrimination and gender inequality in the United States. Additionally, it is recognized in both law and policy that promoting gender equality is critical to achieving foreign policy objectives for a more prosperous and peaceful world. Gender prejudice and resulting gender discrimination begin in childhood. From the moment they're born, girls and boys face unequal gender norms regarding expectations and access to resources and opportunities, with lifelong consequences – in their homes, schools and communities.

For example, the world's boys are often encouraged to go to school and get an education to prepare for work, while girls carry heavy household responsibilities that keep them from school, increasing the odds of child marriage and pregnancy. Despite worldwide progress, gender inequality persists. The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened to put years of hard-won progress at risk. Far too many girls, especially those from the poorest families, still face gender discrimination in education, child marriage and pregnancy, sexual violence and unrecognized domestic work. These are some types of gender inequality. [13,14]

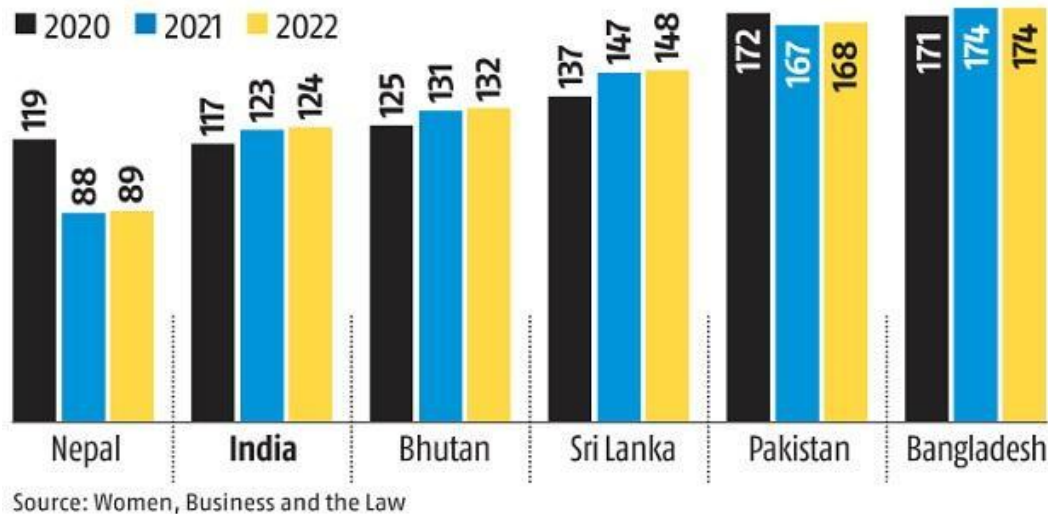
Gender Inequality Examples:

- **Gender inequality in girls education.** Even before the pandemic, girls were more likely than boys to never set foot in a classroom. Conflict, poverty and other forms of social disadvantage also magnify gender inequality in education. Girls living in countries affected by conflict, for example, are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys. Some 9.7 million children were at risk of being forced out of school by the end of 2020, with girls facing an increased risk.
- **Child marriage.** Child marriage is a form of gender-based violence and a result and driver of gender inequality and gender discrimination. Experts predict that the COVID-19 pandemic is set to reverse 25 years of progress, which saw child marriage rates decline. In fact, Save the Children analysis revealed a further 2.5 million girls at risk of marriage by 2025 because of the pandemic—the greatest surge in child marriage rates in nearly three decades.
- **Gender-based violence.** Gender-based violence occurs everywhere around the world across all economic and social groups. While both boys and girls are negatively impacted, girls are particularly at risk. An estimated 1 in 3 women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly at the hands of their partners. Types of violence may include: prenatal sex selection, female infanticide, neglect, female genital mutilation, rape, child marriage, forced prostitution, honor killing and dowry killing. Many of these gross violations of human rights have been used as weapons of war around the world. Refugee children are particularly vulnerable.
- **Child labor.** There are currently 152 million children engaged in child labor around the world. Child labor makes it difficult for children to attend school or limits their attendance, putting them at risk of falling behind their peers. Boys and girls are affected differently by child labor and parents' decisions are often influenced by wider social norms about the different roles that they should play in the home and in society. Girls are much more likely to shoulder the responsibility for household chores while boys are more likely to engage in harmful work such as construction. Girls are usually pulled out of school earlier than boys and are more likely to face sexual exploitation and slavery.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future. Eradicating gender issues means a world where women and men, girls and boys all enjoy equal rights, resources, opportunities and protections.[15,16]

WHERE INDIA STANDS

Women, business and the Law Index



Empowering girls from the start is proven to have lasting and compounding benefits over the course of their lives. When girls are supported to be active in civic and political spaces, in particular, they are empowered with the tools and skills they need to be drivers of positive change in their families and communities. Girls are the experts of their own experiences, priorities and needs, and are powerful catalysts for a world where gender equality flourishes. When girls are empowered to lead their lives, speak their minds and determine their futures, everyone benefits. History suggests that when we fight gender oppression, societies are more stable, safe and prosperous, with happier, better educated citizens.

Investing in gender equality can have large-scale benefits:

- **Every \$1 invested in women's and children's health can generate a \$20 return** – according to the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
- **A girl's eventual income will increase by up to 20% for every year she stays in school** – according to UN Women. It also encourages girls to marry later and have fewer children, and leaves them less vulnerable to violence.
- **Advancing women's equality could add up to \$28 trillion to global annual growth by 2025** – according to the McKinsey Global Institute.[17]

Gender equality is a basic right for all people, including both girls and boys. Based on this understanding, Save the Children believes that it is critical to directly address gender discrimination and gender inequality in order to ensure that no harm comes to children, and to advance our vision for a world where every child attains their equal right to grow up healthy, educated and safe.

A focus on gender equality is essential to close inequality gaps and ensure that we reach every last child, including those who are most vulnerable. Gender inequalities intersect with and exacerbate other factors contributing to vulnerability, including age, race, socio-economic class, gender identity, geography, health status and ability.

To build a more equal, inclusive future, free from gender discrimination, we need to start in childhood. Thanks to supporters like you, Save the Children reaches hundreds of millions of children every year, promoting gender equality and empowering girls, right from the start.

Promoting gender equality works! Since 2000, Save the Children helped achieve a 25% decline in child marriage worldwide, empowering 11 million girls to stay in school or transition to work, deciding for themselves when they're ready for marriage and motherhood.

In addition, Save the Children is proud to be the first nonprofit to be Gender Fair-certified for our commitment to advancing gender equality and empowering the world's girls.[18,19]

Results

Girls and boys see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day – in textbooks, in the media and among the adults who care for them.

Parents may assume unequal responsibility for household work, with mothers bearing the brunt of caregiving and chores. The majority of low-skilled and underpaid community health workers who attend to children are also women, with limited opportunity for professional growth.

And in schools, many girls receive less support than boys to pursue the studies they choose. This happens for a variety of reasons: The safety, hygiene and sanitation needs of girls may be neglected, barring them from regularly attending class. Discriminatory teaching practices and education materials also produce gender gaps in learning and skills development. As a result, nearly 1 in 4 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are neither employed nor in education or training – compared to 1 in 10 boys.

Worldwide, nearly 1 in 4 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are neither employed nor in education or training – compared to 1 in 10 boys.[20,21]

Yet, in early childhood, gender disparities start out small. Girls have higher survival rates at birth, are more likely to be developmentally on track, and are just as likely to participate in preschool. Among those who reach secondary school, girls tend to outperform boys in reading across every country where data are available.

But the onset of adolescence can bring significant barriers to girls' well-being. Gender norms and discrimination heighten their risk of unwanted pregnancy, HIV and AIDS, and malnutrition. Especially in emergency settings and in places where menstruation remains taboo, girls are cut off from the information and supplies they need to stay healthy and safe. In its most insidious form, gender inequality turns violent. Some 1 in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 – around 13 million – have experienced forced sex. In times of both peace and conflict, adolescent girls face the highest risk of gender-based violence. Hundreds of millions of girls worldwide are still subjected to child marriage and female genital mutilation – even though both have been internationally recognized as human rights violations. And violence can occur at birth, like in places where female infanticide is known to persist.

Some 1 in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 – around 13 million globally – have experienced forced sex in their lifetimes.

Harmful gender norms are perpetuated at the highest levels. In some countries, they become entrenched in laws and policies that fail to uphold – or that even violate – girls’ rights, like laws that restrict women from inheriting property. Boys also suffer from gender norms: Social conceptions of masculinity can fuel child labour, gang violence, disengagement from school, and recruitment into armed groups. Despite major hurdles that still deny them equal rights, girls refuse to limit their ambitions. Since the signing of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 – the most comprehensive policy agenda for gender equality – the world has seen uneven progress.[22,23]

More and more girls are attending and completing school, and fewer are getting married or becoming mothers while still children themselves. But discrimination and limiting stereotypes remain rife. Technological change and humanitarian emergencies are also confronting girls with new challenges, while old ones – violence, institutionalized biases, poor learning and life opportunities – persist.

That’s why girls from all walks of life are boldly raising their voices against inequality. Girl-led movements are stopping child marriage and female genital mutilation, demanding action on climate change, and trail-blazing in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) – asserting their power as global change-makers.

Conclusions

Causes of gender inequality in India:

Poverty –

This is the root cause of gender discrimination in the patriarchal Indian society, as the economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity. A total of 30% of people live below the poverty line, and out of this 70% are women.

Illiteracy –

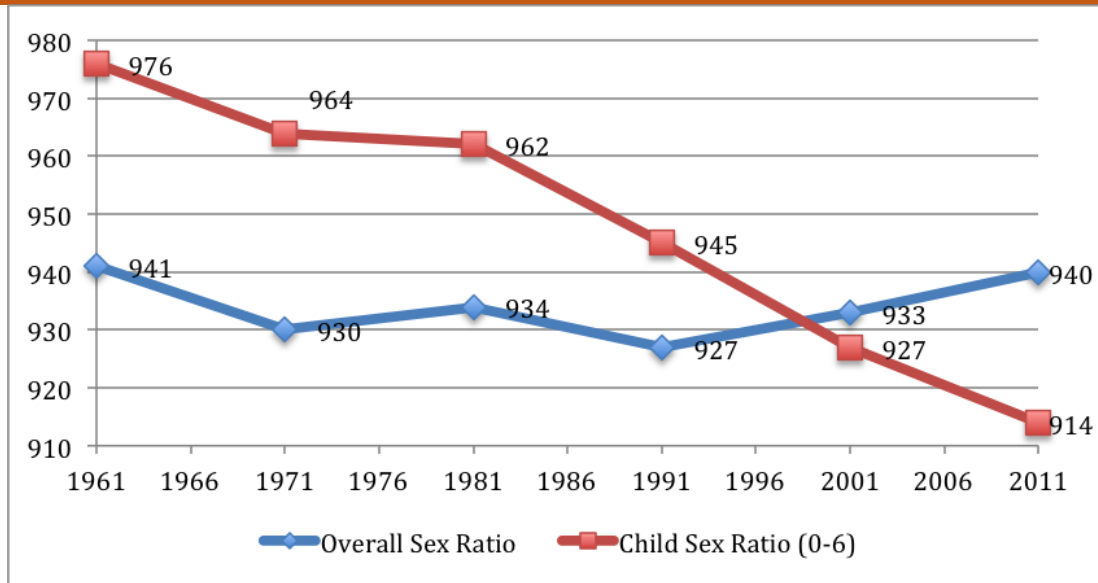
Gender discrimination In India had led to educational backwardness for girls. It’s a sad reality that despite educational reforms in the country, girls in India are still denied a chance at learning. The mindset needs to be changed, and people need to understand the benefits of educating girls. An educated, well-read woman ensures that other members, especially the children of the house, get a quality education.

Patriarchal setup in our Indian society –

Men dominate societal and family life in India. This has been the case in the past ages and continues to be practised in the majority of households. Though this mindset is changing with urbanization and education, there is still a long way to permanently change the scenario.

Social Customs, Beliefs and Practices –

To date, a lot of families have a preference for a male child and disfavour towards the daughter. Sons, especially in the business communities, are considered economic, political, and ritual assets where daughters are considered liabilities.[24]



Lack of Awareness Among Women –

Most of the women are unaware of their fundamental rights and capabilities. They lack a basic understanding of how the socio-economic and political forces affect them. They accept all discriminatory practices that persist in families from generation in the name of tradition and societal norms primarily due to their ignorance and unawareness.

Gender-based discrimination across India can only be checked when girls are not denied their chance to learn and grow in life. Girls like boys should get a great start in life in terms of educational opportunities. This will help them attain economic independence and help them be rightly equipped to contribute towards their upliftment and that of the society they are part of.

NGOs like Save the Children are doing what it takes to uplift the status of the girl child in society through several programmes across India. If you care to bring hope in the lives of thousands of girls in India by ensuring the right environment and opportunities for them, then support an NGO like Save the Children.

Many women would question- is education enough to fight the evil of gender discrimination that is so deep rooted in India. The answer is NO. Education is a start but if we really want to put an end to this evil then we need to change ourselves, our mindset and harmful beliefs that we have been living with. Advocating for education and equal opportunities for women is not enough. In fact, we need to be the channels and mediums for new reforms and campaigns for empowering the women in India.[25]

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